



Safer Today's, Brighter Tomorrows: Decreasing Youth Gang Involvement in Maryland

Christina Gregg, University of Maryland, Baltimore County
Governor's Office for Children

Andrew Gibson, Frostburg State University
Governor's Grants Office

Lindsey Mendoza, University of Maryland, College Park
Maryland Department of Veteran's Affairs

Melissa Montgomery, University of Maryland, Baltimore County
Governor's Policy Office

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Problem Statement

In recent years, Maryland has experienced a sharp increase in gang membership and criminal gang activity. Due to the success of gang franchising, violence has spread into suburban and rural communities, creating a statewide gang problem. Although some areas of Maryland have seen an exceptionally high concentration of gang activity, gangs exist throughout Maryland. These groups have developed in areas that face increased adversity, such as language barriers, economic disadvantage and community disorganization.¹ Further, these groups seek out new members, often at-risk youth. Nationally, 760,000 youth are involved in gangs.² Adolescents are the main targets of gang recruitment and studies have shown that there is a sharp increase in the rate of youth gang involvement at age 15, around the time youth enter high school.³ However, children as young as seven are enticed to join gangs to fill the financial and emotional gaps left by broken homes. Governor Ehrlich has recognized that “[w]e have no more fundamental obligation in government than to ensure the safety of our citizens.”⁴ The Governor also believes that, “improving the well-being of children and families” is a fundamental interest for the State⁵. With the above-noted increase in gang-related criminal activity and the aggressive recruitment of vulnerable youth, the State is at-risk for an even more dramatic rise in gang-related crimes, including such serious offenses as homicide and rape. Further, the State has an interest in preventing gang-related crime in order to draw businesses to the state and foster economic development⁶. Moreover, as Judge Hiram E. Puig-Lugo explained to the defendant in a gang-related homicide, “[e]very time you recruit someone into your “mara” [gang], you are stealing someone from our community.”⁷ Therefore, Maryland must take decisive action to combat the increase in youth involvement in gangs so that all Marylanders can be safe and successful now and in the future.

Overview

Youth participate in a significant amount of criminal gang activity, predominately violent crimes and drug activity⁸. In addition, the punishment of gang members can also be challenging since they can often communicate and direct their gangs while confined within a correctional facility. Further, with forty percent of confined youth involved in gangs

¹ Spergel, I. (1995). *The Youth Gang Problem*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK

² National Youth Gang Center. (2006, April). Highlights of the 2004 National Youth Gang Survey. *OJJDP Fact Sheet*. Retrieved on July 29, 2006, from <http://www.iir.com/nygc/publications/fs200601.pdf>

³ Hill et al. (2001). Early Precursors of Gang Membership: A Study of Seattle Youth. National Youth Gang Center Tallahassee FL.

⁴ Ehrlich, R. L., Jr. (2005, January 24). Governor Ehrlich launches "I.D. MARYLAND" public safety initiative. *Governor's Office Press Release*. Retrieved July 29, 2006, from http://www.gov.state.md.us/pressreleases/2005/012405_idmaryland.html

⁵ Vulnerable Children. (2006, January). In *FY 2007 Budget Highlights* (pp. Page 10) [Brochure]. Maryland: Department of Budget & Management. Retrieved July 14, 2006, from http://www.dbm.maryland.gov/dbm_publishing/public_content/dbm_taxonomy/budget/publications/budget_highlights/fy07_budgethighlights.pdf

⁶ Commerce. (n.d.). *The Five Pillars of the Ehrlich-Steele Administration*. Retrieved July 13, 2006, from <http://www.gov.state.md.us/commerce.html>

⁷ Cauvin, H. E. (2006, April 28). Former MS-13 Leader Gets 30 Years. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved June 24, 2006, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com>

⁸ Egley, A., Howell, J., & Major, A. (n.d.). *National Youth Gang Survey 1999-2001*. Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention.

nationally⁹, the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) finds that “[g]angs... interrupt services in detention because different groups need to be kept separated.”¹⁰ Further, gang involvement in street crime poses an immediate threat to the safety and security of Maryland’s citizens. Because youth gang involvement cannot be sufficiently addressed with a single solution, for this policy proposal, the focus will be on the prevention of youth gang involvement, intervention for youth already in the juvenile justice system, and greater law enforcement cooperation against gang activity within Maryland.

Maryland’s Answer

The State has acknowledged that gang activity and the crime that follows such gangs is a problem in Maryland. While gang activity was initially addressed by the legislature in 2005 through a bill to toughen the punishment for gang recruitment¹¹, the Governor’s Office also established a workgroup to coordinate statewide gang strategies. At the culmination of the workgroup’s efforts, a statewide gang summit was held to openly discuss the status of gang activity and future endeavors. The Governor also announced an additional \$5.6 million from the state and federal governments to support anti-gang strategies.¹² The Governor also supported an initiative for the University of Maryland to use a State Grant to create an informative website for the general public on gangs in Maryland¹³. The issue of gangs, though, must be tackled, not solely by State government, but in coordination with local government. Gang activity is not limited to a particular area; gang members migrate from county to county within the State and also from state to state within the country. Therefore, youth gang involvement necessitates a statewide solution to best protect Maryland’s citizens.

Prevention

Current Situation

Further, studies have shown that the youth, predominately male youth, most susceptible to gang activity include those that live in socially disorganized areas, are part of an ethnic minority, reside in single-parent households, lack social skills, and associate with delinquent peers.¹⁴ These characteristics are only some of those indicative of gang involvement and some youth that are involved with gangs may not possess any of the aforementioned characteristics. A significant risk factor is that “the [gang] influence is so heavy because the peer pressure is just unbelievable that these young people are dealing with.”¹⁵

⁹ Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (1998, August). Youth Gangs: An Overview. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*. Retrieved on July 4, 2006 from <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/jjbulletin/9808/scope.html>

¹⁰ Maryland Department of Juvenile Services. *Gap Analysis Report*. Retrieved on July 13, 2006, from http://www.djs.state.md.us/pdf/gap/gap_analysis.html

¹¹ S. Chapter 313, 2005 Regular Legislative Session (Md. 2005), from <http://mlis.state.md.us/2005rs/billfile/SB0488.htm>.

¹² Dolan, M. (n.d.). Summit elevates anti-gang initiatives. *Baltimore Sun*. Retrieved June 20, 2006, from <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/local/bal-md.gangs02jun02>

¹³ *Maryland Gangs Information and Prevention*. (n.d.). Retrieved June 18, 2006, from <http://www.gangs.umd.edu>

¹⁴ Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (September 2000). Preventing Adolescent Gang Involvement. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*

¹⁵ Berger, J., & Carter, D. (2006, July 27). Gangs recruiting earlier, growing stronger. *The Gazette*. Retrieved July 30, 2006, from http://www.gazette.net/stories/072706/princou184344_31946.shtml

With an increase in elementary and middle-school-aged youth participating in gangs, an after school program is the ideal gang prevention strategy for Maryland. Youth are most vulnerable for gang recruitment and participation in the hours immediately following school dismissal, as many youth are left unsupervised during this timeframe. This statistics are striking: as many as 28% of all Maryland youth are unsupervised in the afternoon and this number jumps to 40% for middle-school students specifically.¹⁶ An after school program has the ability to protect the youth from the dangerous this ‘recruiting’ time period for gangs and to associate youth with more positive social groups.¹⁷ The more effective programs run on a small scale in order to address the specific needs and risk factors of the youth unique to that community. This integrates the best of both worlds- a statewide initiative and county scale expertise.

Recommendation

In order to target the most vulnerable population, most after school model programs have youth recommended to the program by school officials and teachers and family members. Many after school gang prevention programs are already active across the United States, most notably Boys and Girls Club of America’s Gang Prevention through Targeted Outreach program (GPTTO), Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.), and the Broader Urban Involvement and Leadership Development (BUILD) program. Both BUILD and G.R.E.A.T. incorporate an in-school component, where students are educated about gang violence from qualified law enforcement officers. Boys and Girls Club, though, focuses its gang strategy on keeping youth off the streets during those vital afternoon/evening hours and then educating the youth on gang behavior and dangers. Further, youth mentoring is a vital part of the Boys and Girls Club of America’s gang program and BUILD.

The Boys and Girls Club of America’s Gang Prevention through Targeted Outreach program, however, is the best solution for Maryland because this program targets youth where they need it most, after school through mentoring. Studies have shown that most youth who participate in the GPTTO program felt a sense of belonging to the Boys and Girls Club, and many felt the club to be a safer environment then their schools¹⁸. The GPTTO program has been proven to delay the wearing of gang colors, decrease youth’s contact with juvenile justice, decrease criminal behaviors, and improve grades.¹⁹ Implementing the GPTTO program at an already established Boys and Girls Club will cost \$340 per child per year²⁰. At a full capacity, each of the thirteen programs²¹ currently in operation in Maryland can accommodate 50 youth at a total cost of \$17,000 annually, per location²². In addition, 57

¹⁶ The Afterschool Alliance. (2005, March 29). New Survey Data: Maryland Latch-Key Kids from Working Families Vastly Outnumber Those in Afterschool Programs. *The Afterschool Alliance Press Release*. Retrieved on July 30, 2006, from http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/press_archives/america_3pm/MD_NR2.pdf+Maryland%2Blatch-key&hl=en&gl=us&ct=clnk&cd=1&ie=UTF-8

¹⁷ Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (September 2000). Preventing Adolescent Gang Involvement. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*

¹⁸ Abrenton, Amy and Wendy McClanahan (2002). Targeted Outreach: Boys and Girls Club of America’s Approach to Gang Prevention and Intervention. Pinkerton Foundation, NY pp. 10.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Maryland Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs of America. (n.d.). *Positive Youth Development as a Delinquency Prevention/Anti-Gang Strategy*. Funding Proposal.

²² Abrenton, Amy and Wendy McClanahan (2002). Targeted Outreach: Boys and Girls Club of America’s Approach to Gang Prevention and Intervention. Pinkerton Foundation, NY pp. 10.

Boys and Girls Club sites are already established in the State of Maryland, making the implementation of the GPTTO program the most efficient option because start-up costs would not be what they would for BUILD and G.R.E.A.T., programs that would be largely new to Maryland.

Further, the state has already taken action to help fund this program. Each of the thirteen Boys and Girls Clubs operating in Maryland has been given as much as \$20,000 by the Governor's Office for youth development programming.²³ Also, this program can be funded with additional state allocations, as well as private grants, such as Americorps* state, and federal grants through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. In addition, it is a more beneficial use of state money and time to keep youth *out* of the justice system is more beneficial than incarcerating and tracking them once they have entered.

Intervention

Current Situation

Placement in juvenile residential facilities, Maryland's commonly used response to troubled youth, frequently leads to gang involvement.²⁴ The facts are these: the exposure to a "higher education in criminal behavior" that occurs in detention centers [whether they be for juveniles or adults] has actually been proven to increase long-term recidivism rates in juveniles²⁵ and "[c]onfinement in a juvenile correctional facility is one of the strongest predictors of adult prison gang membership."²⁶

Recommendation

The juvenile detention centers that exist in Maryland today, such as Cheltenham, with their emphasis on punishment and repeated reports of abuse and neglect, are not the answer to the problem of gangs or the issue of juvenile justice in general.²⁷ Instead, alternatives must be considered that focus on rehabilitation rather than punishment.

Youth who are adjudicated in the juvenile justice system, whether or not their acts warrant residential placement, should be treated with Multisystemic Therapy (MST), which is already in use in some jurisdictions. MST provides behavior modification for troubled juveniles and family-centered counseling for a youth's entire family, addressing a number of risk factors for youth gang involvement.²⁸ The program could also be easily incorporated into current DJS programs because MST "...can be adopted by any organization that provides services to the families of youths with serious behavior problems in the interest of

²³ Maryland Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs of America. (n.d.). *Positive Youth Development as a Delinquency Prevention/Anti-Gang Strategy*. Funding Proposal.

²⁴ Danitz, T. (1998, September 28). The Gangs Behind Bars – Prison Gangs. *Insights on the News* Retrieved July 8, 2006, from http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1571/is_n36_v14/ai_21161641

²⁵ Center for Policy Alternatives. (n.d.) *Juvenile Detention Reform*. Retrieved July 4, 2006 from <http://www.cfpa.org/issues/issue.cfm/issue/JuvenileDetentionReform.xml>

²⁶ Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (1998, August). Youth Gangs: An Overview. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*. Retrieved on July 4, 2006 from <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/jjbulletin/9808/scope.html>

²⁷ Amon, M. (2004, January 27). Md. Cites Progress At Center For Youth. In *Maryland Department of Juvenile Services*. Retrieved July 8, 2006, from http://www.djs.state.md.us/press_center/press_releases/pr012704.html

²⁸ Mendel, R. A. (n.d.). *Less Hype, More Help: Reducing Juvenile Crime, What Works – And What Doesn't*. American Youth Policy Forum Washington.

improving their overall long-term effectiveness, while realizing significant cost savings.”²⁹ Participants have 43% fewer arrests and 66% fewer weeks in a juvenile detention center.³⁰ Further, for every dollar that is spent for MST, taxpayers are saved \$8.38 in other correctional services.³¹ The limitation of this program is that it only has three community-based sites. Therefore, the program must be expanded to serve all Maryland youth who would benefit from these services, including those in juvenile detention.

Youth re-entering the community after spending time in a correctional facility should be referred to the Maryland Re-Entry Partnership, which currently provides former inmates choosing to live in one of five zip codes in Baltimore City with supportive services and case management at least seventy-five days before their release and can continue in the program for up to two years after their release. Services include transitional housing, employment and life-skills training and support groups.³² This program has been quite successful in reducing recidivism; former inmates who utilize this program have a recidivism rate of just 20%, significantly less than the overall recidivism rate of former Department of Corrections inmates, 50%.³³ Unfortunately, given the strict eligibility requirements for participation in the program, a significant number of people who could truly benefit from the program are not granted access to it.

Each of the alternatives put forth in this proposal would reduce gang involvement for youth in contact with DJS and the implementation of all of them would have the greatest impact on youth gang involvement. However, if only one proposal is implemented, community-based MST is the best method for achieving this goal because the increased stability brought to families, and, thereby, communities by the use of home and community-based interventions reduces the risk of youth gang activity by reducing the risk factors.

Enforcement

Current Situation

While prevention and intervention strategies attempt to correct the gang problem in the long term, they do not necessarily solve the issue in the present. Gangs still pose a serious danger to the innocent citizen living in a Maryland community. As one parent put it, "My children were threatened in school. They were bullied and threatened to join a gang or suffer the violent consequences. My children lived in fear-gang members made it clear that if kids reported the gang's efforts to recruit new members, their parents would be threatened."³⁴ In such instances, suppression is the only remedy.

Recommendation

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ MST Services. (n.d.) MST Home Page in *MST Therapy*. Retrieved July 30, 2006 from <http://www.mstservices.com>

³¹ Mendel, R. A. (n.d.). *Less Hype, More Help: Reducing Juvenile Crime, What Works – And What Doesn't*. American Youth Policy Forum Washington.

³² The Enterprise Foundation. (2004). *Innovations in Community Development: Maryland Re-Entry Partnership*. Retrieved July 1, 2006, from <http://www.enterprisefoundation.org/resources/documents/MdReEntry11705.pdf>

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security. (2005). *Gang Deterrence and Community Protection Act of 2005* (64).

Due to the statewide threat of gang violence and because of the dire need for all counties to share intelligence and to coordinate cohesive enforcement units, a statewide strike force is necessary to aid in the identification, investigation, and arrest gang members.

The statewide gang strike force, an independent law enforcement body, is intended to address gang-related crime in all 24 jurisdictions in Maryland. To support the function of such a strike force, a better intelligence system for gangs in Maryland must be created through collaboration between state and local law enforcement. Based on the model that has had a great deal of success in Minnesota, the gang strike force has proven its ability to severely curtail gang-related crime statewide³⁵.

In establishing an organization that is not tied to any one local jurisdiction the sovereignty of all jurisdictions is maintained. Also, in Minnesota, the Gang Strike Force cost approximately \$5.6 million dollars. However, only \$3 million came from the State's 2006 fiscal year budget.³⁶ The additional \$2.6 million came from the federal government in the form of a Byrne Grant³⁷ for which Maryland could also qualify.³⁸ With this funding, the Minnesota Gang Strike Force totaled approximately 700 gang-related arrests each year.³⁹ A gang strike force has the capability to address two of Maryland's interests, public safety⁴⁰ and economic development.⁴¹ While suppressing gang violence, business and community residents can be assured that the State is attempting to save them from losses that could potentially be incurred by gang violence.

Final Recommendation

Taking a youth-based preventative approach addresses the causes of gangs before they promulgate into a costly and violent problem as opposed to relying solely on the enforcement of laws and the incarceration of criminals. A last resort ought not to be the State's only resort. However, it must also be recognized that no one approach will reach all people in need. Further, other areas of the nation have had success in reducing youth gang involvement by using these sorts of approaches together. Boston achieved a 78% reduction in its homicide rate between 1990 and 1998 by introducing a youth gang taskforce and implementing community-based prevention and intervention programs to address juvenile delinquency and gang involvement.⁴² Therefore, the implementation of not only the prevention proposal, but also the intervention and enforcement proposals outlined above, will lead to the best outcomes for all of Maryland's citizens.

³⁵ Khoo, M (2003, June 26). Anti-gang Unit Spared for At Least One More Year. Minnesota Public Radio News Forum

³⁶ Minnesota Gang Strike Force. (2006). 2006 Gang Strike Force Budget

³⁷ J Boisvert, personal communication, July 20, 2006

³⁸ Bureau of Justice Assistance. (n.d.) Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Program: Formula Grant Program Guidance, FY 2004. from *Office of Justice Programs*. Retrieved July 28, 2006 from http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/byrneguide_04/printr_fr.html

³⁹ Khoo, M (2003, June 26). Anti-gang Unit Spared for At Least One More Year. Minnesota Public Radio News Forum

⁴⁰ Ehrlich, R. L., Jr. (2005, January 24). Governor Ehrlich launches "I.D. MARYLAND" public safety initiative. *Governor's Office Press Release*. Retrieved July 29, 2006, from http://www.gov.state.md.us/pressreleases/2005/012405_idmaryland.html

⁴¹ Commerce. (n.d.). *The Five Pillars of the Ehrlich-Steele Administration*. Retrieved July 13, 2006, from <http://www.gov.state.md.us/commerce.html>

⁴² Mendel, R. A. (n.d.). *Less Hype, More Help: Reducing Juvenile Crime, What Works – And What Doesn't*. American Youth Policy Forum: Washington.

Problem Statement

In recent years, Maryland has experienced a sharp increase in gang membership and criminal gang activity throughout the State. Due to the success of gang franchising, violence has spread into suburban and rural communities, creating a statewide gang problem. Although some areas of Maryland have seen an exceptionally high concentration of gang activity, gangs exist throughout Maryland. These groups have developed in areas that face increased adversity, such as language barriers, economic disadvantage and community disorganization.⁴³ Further, these groups seek out new members, often at-risk youth. Nationally, 760,000 youth are involved in gangs.⁴⁴ Adolescents are the main of gang recruitment and studies have shown that there is a sharp increase in the rate of youth gang involvement at age 15, around the time youth enter high school.⁴⁵ However, children as young as seven are enticed to join gangs to fill the financial and emotional gaps left by broken homes. Governor Ehrlich has recognized that “[w]e have no more fundamental obligation in government than to ensure the safety of our citizens.”⁴⁶ The Governor also believes that, “improving the well-being of children and families” is of great interest for the State⁴⁷. With the above-noted increase in gang-related criminal activity and the aggressive recruitment of vulnerable youth, the State is at-risk for an even more dramatic rise in gang-related crimes, including such serious

⁴³ Spergel, I. (1995). *The Youth Gang Problem*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK

⁴⁴ National Youth Gang Center. (2006, April). Highlights of the 2004 National Youth Gang Survey. *OJJDP Fact Sheet*. Retrieved on July 29, 2006, from <http://www.iir.com/nygc/publications/fs200601.pdf>

⁴⁵ Hill et al. (2001). Early Precursors of Gang Membership: A Study of Seattle Youth. National Youth Gang Center Tallahassee FL.

⁴⁶ Ehrlich, R. L., Jr. (2005, January 24). Governor Ehrlich launches "I.D. MARYLAND" public safety initiative. *Governor's Office Press Release*. Retrieved July 29, 2006, from http://www.gov.state.md.us/pressreleases/2005/012405_idmaryland.html

⁴⁷ Vulnerable Children. (2006, January). In *FY 2007 Budget Highlights* (pp. Page 10) [Brochure]. Maryland: Department of Budget & Management. Retrieved July 14, 2006, from http://www.dbm.maryland.gov/dbm_publishing/public_content/dbm_taxonomy/budget/publications/budget_highlights/fy07_budgethighlights.pdf

offenses as homicide and rape. Further, the State has an interest in preventing gang-related crime in order to draw businesses to the state and foster economic development. Moreover, as Judge Hiram E. Puig-Lugo explained to the defendant in a gang-related murder case, “[e]very time you recruit someone into your “mara” [gang], you are stealing someone from our community.”⁴⁸ Therefore, Maryland must take decisive action to combat the increase in youth involvement in gangs so that all Marylanders can be safe and successful now and in the future.

Background

Gang Definition

For decades, researchers and government officials have found it difficult to agree on a universal definition of a gang. This is mostly because gang behavior does not conform to a set pattern. One widely accepted definition acknowledged by many federal and state government agencies and legislatures defines gangs as “a group or association of three or more people with a common identifying sign, symbol or name, the members of which, individually or collectively, engage in criminal activity that creates an atmosphere of fear or intimidation.”⁴⁹ This basic definition was used in early research by Irving Spergel and was derived from the California Penal Code in the 1980’s, one of the first states to observe a significant rise in gang activity and, consequently, have to remedy the gang situation.⁵⁰ The National Youth Gang Center identifies gangs as self-forming

⁴⁸ Cauvin, H. E. (2006, April 28). Former MS-13 Leader Gets 30 Years. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved June 24, 2006, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com>

⁴⁹ Spergel, I. (1995). *The Youth Gang Problem: A Community Approach*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁵⁰ Ibid

organizations with youth, mostly between the ages of 12 and 24.⁵¹ Evidence of criminal activity among gang members has become a controversial matter in the evolution of a gang definition. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has asserted that gangs must be involved in criminal behavior to be classified as an organized gang. For the purposes of our proposal, we will follow the comprehensive definition that the Maryland General Assembly has outlined for gangs:

A group or association of three or more persons: (1) that forms to engage in criminal activity, including acts by juveniles that would be crimes if committed by adults, for the purposes of pecuniary gain or to create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation either collectively or with knowledge of the acts of the members of the group; and (2) whose members have a common identifying sign, symbol, or name.⁵²

The Emergence of Gangs

The modern gang evolved on the streets of Los Angeles in the 1960's and 70's, mostly due to the increased levels of poverty and rioting within the city, particularly within the black community.⁵³ The two most well known organized gangs- the Bloods and the Crips- formed as a result of the early gang movement. These gangs quickly spread throughout the United States, along with the illicit drug trade, particularly of crack cocaine.⁵⁴ Both “wannabe” gangs that attempt to emulate the style and behavior of the original street gangs, Blood gangs and Blood gang members with ties to the east-coast

⁵¹ Egley, A., Howell, J., & Major, A. (n.d.). *National Youth Gang Survey 1999-2001*. Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention.

⁵² Criminal Law and Procedure-Criminal Gang Offenses, S. Res. Senate Bill 488, 2005 Legislative Session (Md.) (enacted).

⁵³ Bloods. (n.d.). *Gangs in Maryland*. Retrieved June 30, 2006, from <http://www.gangs.umd.edu>

⁵⁴ Ibid

chapter of the Bloods have emerged in Maryland, particularly in Baltimore City and Baltimore, Harford and Prince George's Counties. For example, in 2004, two men killed an Edgewood taxicab driver and father of nine, in what Harford County police have reported was a gang initiation rite for the Bloods.⁵⁵

The Rise of Immigrant Gangs

National studies show that the Hispanic population makes up nearly half of the gang population nationwide.⁵⁶ The challenges new immigrants face when moving to the United States, such as language and cultural disparities and financial instability, make that population more vulnerable to join gangs or be the victim of gang violence. In Maryland, an increase in Hispanic-based gang activity has come to the attention of the public in recent years. Mara-Salvatrucha (MS-13), Vatos Locos (VL), and Street Thug Criminals (STC), the most popular of the Hispanic gangs, make up nearly sixty-five percent (65%) of all gang membership in Montgomery County.⁵⁷ In Prince George's County's Police District I, an area with a predominately Hispanic population, police have reported that over 400 people are involved in gangs.⁵⁸ According to information assembled by the Joint Task Force for Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, Hispanics tend to "congregate [into gangs] based on national origin."⁵⁹ For instance, MS-13 began with members of primarily El Salvadorian origins, though it now includes members of a variety of Hispanic origins. Recently, suspected MS-13 members allegedly

⁵⁵ Fenton, J. (2006, June 8). Man gets 45 years in killing. *Baltimore Sun*. Retrieved June 20, 2006, from <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/local/harford/bal-md.ha.miller08>

⁵⁶ Egley, A., Howell, J., & Major, A. (n.d.). *National Youth Gang Survey 1999-2001*. Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention. \

⁵⁷ Montgomery County. (n.d.). *Gangs in Maryland*. Retrieved June 30, 2006, from <http://www.gangs.umd.edu>

⁵⁸ Prince George's County. (n.d.). *Gangs in Maryland*. Retrieved June 30, 2006, from University of Maryland Web site: <http://www.gangs.umd.edu>

⁵⁹ *Joint County Gang Prevention Task Force*. (2004, September). Montgomery County and Prince George's County.

killed three innocent bystanders in Adelphi, Maryland, a heavily Latino neighborhood. Supposedly, the assailants shouted the name “Mara-Salvatrucha” as they shot at the victims.⁶⁰

The Proliferation of Youth Gangs

Youth are heavily recruited to join the more notorious, nationally affiliated gangs, such as the Bloods and MS-13⁶¹ some youth effectively organize and maintain their own gangs. Youth gangs saw rapid escalation in membership throughout the country in the 1990’s, including a movement from the urban environment to the suburbs and small towns.⁶² Experts suggest that the gangster culture and its depiction in the media were increasingly glorified, bringing the culture of gangs into the homes of adolescents all across the country. Subsequently, the “wannabe” gangs, mostly composed of youth, emerged.

According to the National Youth Gang Report, approximately 21,500 gangs persist in the United States today, with approximately 33% of gang members being under the age of 18. By 1995, all fifty states reported a youth gang presence. Poor school performance, antisocial behavior, and delinquent peers are only a few of the many causes that put youth at risk for gang involvement, experts argue.⁶³ Reaching out to youth with different levels of need, who are suffering from various social inequities, can be a daunting task for local and state government officials to tackle.

Characteristics of Youth Gang Involvement

⁶⁰ 3 Die, 1 Hurt in Suspected Gang Shooting. (2006, July 2). *Washington Post*. Retrieved July 5, 2006, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006>

⁶¹ Bloods; MS-13. (n.d.). *Gangs in Maryland*. Retrieved June 30, 2006, from University of Maryland Web site: <http://www.gangs.umd.edu>

⁶² Maxson, C. (1998, October). Gang Members on the Move. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*.

⁶³ Esbensen, F.-A. (2000, September). Preventing Adolescent Gang Involvement. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*..

Although some general concepts have been agreed upon regarding the location, size, degree of violence, and type of youth that are more inclined to join gangs, a great amount of variability exists in regards to gangs and their behaviors.⁶⁴ In this section, an attempt will be made to address certain general characteristics of gang tendencies, including factors that make youth more susceptible to gangs.

Where Do Gangs Form?

Gangs have the capability of forming in places with many different types of social and economic conditions. Researchers have found an overwhelming amount of evidence, though, that the most at-risk areas for gang activity have a substantial degree of social disorganization,⁶⁵ “characterized by high rates of poverty, mobility, welfare dependency, and single-parents households.”⁶⁶ At the onset of gang formation, most organized street gangs were found in the urban environment, where social disorganization was high. Increasingly though, gangs have moved from within the cities to suburbs and small towns, such as Prince George’s and Harford counties, which include areas that also have poor social organization. The reason behind gang sprawl can be attributed to a “response to territorial challenges or perceived protection needs.”⁶⁷ The theory rests on the argument that the more gangs arise within a geographic area, the less “territory” each gang will possess, thus the demand for more territory grows, forcing a gang sprawl. For example, gangs and gang activity has spread outside of Baltimore City, and now a gang presence exists in Harford County.

Who is at-risk to become involved in gangs?

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Maxson, C. (1998, October). Gang Members on the Move. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*.

The alleged recruitment tactics of many of the more notorious gangs are alarming, such as the “jumping in” method, in which the members assault the recruit.⁶⁸ Many impressionable youths often are targets of these aggressive ways of gang members. Certain factors make youth more susceptible to join a gang. If a youth shows signs of multiple risk factors, then the likelihood of such a youth joining a gang increases significantly.⁶⁹ According to the Ebenson’s research for the OJJDP, the risk factors that predispose certain youths to gangs fall under three categories: individual and family demographics, personal attributes, and peer group, school and community factors.⁷⁰

Individual and Family Demographics

To begin with, research has discovered that, although female membership of gangs is evident and even arguably on the rise, most gang involvement is “exclusively as a male phenomenon,” as more than 90% of members are male.⁷¹ In addition to gender, gang recruitment targets a certain age group, specifically those between the ages of 12 and 25, although many gang members are older than 25 and, surprisingly, some are as young as seven.⁷² The National Youth Gang Survey also researched the age factor for involvement in gangs, and determined that older youth will remain in gangs for longer periods of time, mainly due to the same reason they joined the gang- lack of employment opportunities and a need for money. For some older members, the gang could be their only possible source of income.

⁶⁸ Bloods; MS-13. (n.d.). *Gangs in Maryland*. Retrieved June 30, 2006, from University of Maryland Web site: <http://www.gangs.umd.edu>

⁶⁹ Hill, K. G., Lui, C., & Hawkins, J. D. (2001, December). Early Precursors of Gang Membership: A Study of Seattle Youth. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*.

⁷⁰ Esbensen, F.-A. (2000, September). Preventing Adolescent Gang Involvement. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Comprehensive Gang Model. (n.d.). *Model Programs*. Retrieved July 14, 2006, from Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Web site:

http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5/TitleV_MPG_Table_Ind_Rec.asp?id=311

National studies have shown that minority involvement in gangs is on the rise throughout the United States. Members of “wannabe” or established street gangs often recruit heavily among minorities, especially African Americans, and then require horrific initiation practices, such as the Harford murder, in order for the recruits to join the gang. The National Youth Gang Survey contends that African Americans and Hispanics constitute a majority of gang involvement.⁷³ According to the Joint County Gang Prevention Task Force, Prince George’s County has demonstrated an “alarming rise in Hispanic gangs,” in the Northern part of the County.⁷⁴

However, gang involvement is not exclusively a minority affair. Minorities compose a large percentage of gang involvement within cities, with only 11% percent of said involvement being by Caucasians. On the other hand, a much larger number, approximately 30%, of gang members in suburban and small town environments are Caucasian.⁷⁵

This is not to say that gangs have a certain ethnic composition simply because a given group is more prone to gang involvement. Instead, experts argue that the greatest predictor of the racial composition of a gang is the dominant race of the area where the gang has formed.⁷⁶ Simply put, an African American gang will form in a community with a significant number of African Americans.

Race is not the only predictor of youth gang involvement, though. In addition, research has shown that the domestic life of a youth is also a strong predictor for gang

⁷³ Egley, A., Howell, J., & Major, A. (n.d.). *National Youth Gang Survey 1999-2001*. Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention.

⁷⁴ *Joint County Gang Prevention Task Force*. (2004, September). Montgomery County and Prince George's County.

⁷⁵ Esbensen, F.-A. (2000, September). Preventing Adolescent Gang Involvement. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

activity. Both income levels of parents and strength of parent-child relationships factor into the probability that a youth will join a gang. . The social disorganization of a community coupled with a lack of stability in a child's domestic life is much greater risk factors for gang involvement than a child's race or ethnicity

Personal Attributes

Research has shown that personal characteristics also indicate whether a youth is susceptible to gang involvement. Although many of the youth in gangs demonstrate delinquent behaviors, studies show discrepancies in differentiating between the non-gang delinquent youth and the gang-affiliated delinquent youth.⁷⁷ One particular study found that most gang youth possess an antisocial behavior⁷⁸ and delinquent self-conception.⁷⁹ Studies of youth gang members also reveal that gang youth “engage in more-risk-seeking behavior, were less committed to school, and reported less communication with, and lower levels of attachment to, their parents.”⁸⁰ In sum, studies have recognized the clear difference between non-delinquent youth and gangs, but have also noted that gang youth share several of the main characteristics as other delinquent youth.

Peer Group, School, and Community Factors

Research has consistently shown that peers have perhaps the greatest influence on youth gang involvement. “High levels of interaction with antisocial peers” contribute to a youth's attitude toward overall delinquent behavior and gang association.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Esbensen, F.-A. (2000, September). Preventing Adolescent Gang Involvement. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*.

⁷⁸ Hill, K. G., Lui, C., & Hawkins, J. D. (2001, December). Early Precursors of Gang Membership: A Study of Seattle Youth. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*.

⁷⁹ Maxson, C.L., Whitlock, M.L., and Klein, M.W. 1998. Vulnerability to street gang membership: Implications for practice. *Social Service Review* 72:70-91

⁸⁰ Esbensen, F.-A. (2000, September). Preventing Adolescent Gang Involvement. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*.

⁸¹ Ibid.

Adolescents, who are involved with gang activity, also appear to have a lower interest in their academic life.⁸² Some studies have suggested that the rate of school involvement and success is more indicative of female involvement in gangs and less of male involvement.⁸³ Overall, peer groups that form in areas of low social organization are more likely to become involved with gang activity than peer groups forming in other communities.

Method for Assessing a Gang Problem

In October of 1991, the federal government set out to develop a rubric for local and state governments to develop their own gang strategies.⁸⁴ After researching youth gang involvement and recruitment across the United States, OJJDP developed a simple strategic method known as the Comprehensive Gang Model,. The first step to the Comprehensive Gang Model involves *community mobilization*, which requires community leaders to define their problem within their region and organize resources that might be useful in alleviating gang activity.⁸⁵ Often, community leaders have difficulty recognizing and defining the specifics of their gang problem.⁸⁶ In order to address the community's gang problem, some local and state government's have chosen to assemble

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Stedman, J., & Weisel, D. L. (1998). *Addressing Community Gang Problems: A Model for Problem Solving*. Bureau of Justice Assistance. Retrieved August 3, 2006, from <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/164273.pdf>

⁸⁵ Comprehensive Gang Model. (n.d.). *Model Programs*. Retrieved July 14, 2006, from Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Web site: http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5//TitleV_MPG_Table_Ind_Rec.asp?id=311

⁸⁶ Stedman, J., & Weisel, D. L. (1998). *Addressing Community Gang Problems: A Model for Problem Solving*. Bureau of Justice Assistance. Retrieved August 3, 2006, from <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/164273.pdf>

a task force that first analyzes the issue, and then responds to the analysis with detailed recommendations.⁸⁷

The second phase of the Comprehensive Gang Model introduces *social intervention*, a method for reaching out to the youth through social institutions. For instance, the Boys and Girls Club of America offers a Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach program that reaches out to the most at-risk children in a community and educates them on the dangers of gangs.⁸⁸

Following the social intervention, the local or state government would then look towards a *provision of social opportunities* (the third step to the OJJDP model), which provides “individualized services for each youth based on his or her needs.”⁸⁹ An individualized service may include job placement for older youths or family counseling for younger youths.

Relief from gang violence is one of the principle objectives of the Comprehensive Gang Model.⁹⁰ The most immediate method to solve the violence dilemma associated with gangs is through *suppression*, the fourth step to the OJJDP Gang Model. Suppression involves a stricter level of law enforcement and greater communication between law enforcement agencies and correctional agencies.

The final, and arguably most important, ingredient to the Comprehensive Gang Model is *organizational change and development of local agencies*, which mandates

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Special Initiatives. (n.d.). *Boys and Girls Club of America*. Retrieved July 17, 2006, from <http://www.bgca.org/programs/specialized.asp>

⁸⁹ Comprehensive Gang Model. (n.d.). *Model Programs*. Retrieved July 14, 2006, from Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Web site: http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5//TitleV_MPG_Table_Ind_Rec.asp?id=311

⁹⁰ Stedman, J., & Weisel, D. L. (1998). *Addressing Community Gang Problems: A Model for Problem Solving*. Bureau of Justice Assistance. Retrieved August 3, 2006, from <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/164273.pdf>

collaboration and cooperation among all agencies, who are involved in the development of gang prevention and suppression strategies.

Because of the successes of programs that followed the Comprehensive Gang Model, the recommendations for our proposal will attempt to follow the OJJDP model in a multifaceted fashion.⁹¹ Particularly, our recommendations will focus on social intervention, a provision of social opportunities, and suppression through enforcement.

Maryland's Answer

With the mobility of gangs and variability of the resources gangs thrive on, the gang issue transcends local jurisdictions. Within the State of Maryland, some local governments have recognized a gang problem within their boundaries, while other local governments have not. Using the guidelines and suggestions set forth by the federal government, the State has started to recognize the issues surrounding gangs and has created initiatives that attempt to alleviate gang activity.

Locally

Because of their extended history of gang activity and youth gang involvement, two counties in Maryland, Montgomery and Prince George's, have attempted to face the challenge gang activity poses through extensive collaboration and implementation. The Joint County Gang Prevention Task Force, first assembled in February 2004, recognized the enormous burden gang activity was placing on the communities with approximately 550 active gang members in Montgomery County and over 400 active gang members in

⁹¹ Comprehensive Gang Model. (n.d.). *Model Programs*. Retrieved July 14, 2006, from Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Web site: http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5//TitleV_MPG_Table_Ind_Rec.asp?id=311

Prince George's County.⁹² After collaborating for almost six months, the Task Force developed recommendations on how to curtail gang activity, including implementing after-school programs, conducting community meetings to discuss gangs with the public, providing assistance to municipalities and non-profit groups to develop gang prevention programs, and creating work opportunities programs to give at-risk youth other options. In the two years following the publication of the Task Force's Final Report, Prince George's and Montgomery County's have taken measures to implement these recommendations.⁹³ For instance, the International Corridor CSAFE along with the Montgomery County Gang Intelligence Unit has received a state grant that has allowed them to develop a work opportunities program, one of the Task Force's recommendations.

Other counties, in addition to Prince George's and Montgomery, have recognized the need for a gang analysis. Recently, Carroll County, a mostly rural Northern Maryland jurisdiction, requested a state grant so that they could examine their gang problem.⁹⁴

Statewide

In October of 2005, Lieutenant Governor Steele first addressed the topic of gangs, and initiated the creation of a Statewide Planning Workgroup on Gangs. The Workgroup focused on bringing together the different regions of Maryland, with their individual gang problems, and developing a statewide strategy. The Governor's Office of Crime Control

⁹² *Joint County Gang Prevention Task Force*. (2004, September). Montgomery County and Prince George's County.

⁹³ *Joint County Gang Prevention Task Force*. (2004, September). Montgomery County and Prince George's County.

⁹⁴ Baker, I. (2006, June 19). County to study gang activity. *Carroll County Times*.

and Prevention (GOCCP) also sponsored a Byrne Grant⁹⁵ for the University of Maryland's Public Safety Training and Technical Assistance Program to create and maintain a public information website on the nature of gangs in Maryland and within the counties.⁹⁶ During the 2005 legislation, Senator Jacobs put forth Senate Bill 488 to stiffen the penalties for gang activities.⁹⁷ In particular, the bill prohibits a person from threatening another person in order to coerce them to join or leave a gang, and adds another penalty for those who commit the latter offense on school property or within 1,000 feet of a school. Prior to the passing of Senate Bill 488/House Bill 849, the General Assembly had not specifically targeted punishment for criminal activity done on behalf of a gang whether collectively or individually. On June 1, 2006, the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention and the U.S. Attorneys Office hosted a day long summit to openly discuss the status of gang activity in Maryland and what should be done in the future to curb such activity.⁹⁸ Also at the summit, the Governor announced an additional \$5.6 million from combined efforts of the State, the U.S. Attorney's Office, and the federal government to combat gangs in Maryland.⁹⁹

The State of Gangs in Maryland

National trends have shown that gang activity first arose in large cities across America, including Baltimore, but within the past decade gang activity has also spread

⁹⁵ Byrne Memorial Assistance Formula Grant Program. (n.d.). *Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention*. Retrieved July 13, 2006, from http://www.goccp.org/686_two/nofas/cj/byrne_2004_nofa_continuance.php

⁹⁶ *Maryland Gangs Information and Prevention*. (n.d.). Retrieved July 5, 2006, from <http://www.gangs.umd.edu>

⁹⁷ Criminal Law and Procedure-Criminal Gang Offenses, S. Res. Senate Bill 488, 2005 Legislative Session (Md.) (enacted).

⁹⁸ Vogel, S. (2006, June 2). Broad Gang Presence Requires Parents' Vigilance, Officials Say. *Washington Post*. Retrieved June 20, 2006, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com>

⁹⁹ Reduce gang violence, change sentencing laws. (2006, June 21). *The Baltimore Examiner*.

into the suburban and small town environment within Maryland. For instance, the gangs in Baltimore have ridden the tide of urban sprawl and have moved out into the Baltimore suburbs, particularly Harford County. Other suburbs of Maryland have also experienced a wave of gang violence, including Aberdeen, Waldorf, and Takoma Park. Even small towns in the more rural sections of Maryland have witnessed an increase in gang activity in recent years, such as Salisbury, Hagerstown and Frederick.

Gang Prevention

The Problem

Exposure to gangs has increasingly become a part of life for many adolescents. The gangster culture and its depiction in the media have become increasingly glorified, bringing the culture of gangs into homes with young adolescents all across the country. Rappers such as Jay-Z, 50 Cent, and Eminem boast of their criminal pasts. Further, “[t]he [gang] influence is so heavy because the peer pressure is just unbelievable that these young people are dealing with.”¹⁰⁰ Therefore, youth involvement in gangs is a major concern for the state of Maryland. In order to impede the propagation of gangs, cutting off the supply of newly susceptible youth would be the best option for Maryland. This can be done by implementing an in school and/or after school program that prepares youth to resist gang recruitment and violence.

Current Programs

¹⁰⁰ Berger, J., & Carter, D. (2006, July 27). Gangs recruiting earlier, growing stronger. *The Gazette*. Retrieved July 30, 2006, from http://www.gazette.net/stories/072706/princou184344_31946.shtml

Gang Resistance Education and Training

The Gang Resistance Education and Training model (G.R.E.A.T.) was created by the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives in association with the Police Department of Phoenix Arizona in 1991 and went nationwide in 2003.¹⁰¹ The G.R.E.A.T. model differs from others because it is an educational component taught to all students in the classroom, not after-school nor only to those who exhibit ‘risk factors.’ Educators and law enforcement officers participate in the four distinct components of the G.R.E.A.T. model: the six-week elementary school component, the thirteen-week middle school component, the six-week families component and the summer component of variable length¹⁰². Participating law enforcement officers attend G.R.E.A.T. officer training in order to become effective instructors.¹⁰³

The elementary school component is intended for fourth and fifth graders and is used largely as a foundation for the middle school component. It establishes a “positive bond between law enforcement and youth during their early developmental years.”¹⁰⁴ After each thirty-minute session, a parent letter is sent home to keep parents informed about the program and encourage parental support.

The middle school component is the most popular of the four components and deals with the skills youth will need to avoid gang involvement directly, including avoiding gang pressure and gang violence, while further developing relationships

¹⁰¹ History of the G.R.E.A.T. program. (2006, March 23). *G.R.E.A.T. Gang Resistance Education and Training*. Retrieved July 12, 2006, from <http://www.great-online.org/history.htm>

¹⁰² History of the G.R.E.A.T. program. (2006, March 23). *G.R.E.A.T. Gang Resistance Education and Training*. Retrieved July 12, 2006, from <http://www.great-online.org/history.htm>

¹⁰³ G.R.E.A.T. Officer Training. (2006, March 23). *G.R.E.A.T. Gang Resistance Education and Training*. Retrieved July 13, 2006, from <http://www.great-online.org/greatofficertraining.htm>

¹⁰⁴ G.R.E.A.T. Elementary School Component (2006, March 23). *G.R.E.A.T. Gang Resistance Education and Training*. Retrieved July 12, 2006, from <http://www.great-online.org/elementaryschoolcurriculum.htm>

between students and law enforcement officers. The program is also an ideal complement to other prevention programs that foster improved peer, parental, and community relationships.¹⁰⁵

The G.R.E.A.T. summer program is intended as a follow-up to the middle school curriculum and is adjusted to meet the needs of students during the months when school is not in session by keeping youth occupied, active and supervised during a time when boredom invites temptations. Further, the goal of the program is to “increase [students] opportunities for social, cognitive, and interpersonal growth.”¹⁰⁶

The families’ component of the G.R.E.A.T. model is designed for parents and children (between 10 and 14 year-old). This component fosters skills for effective communication between family members, proper discipline, consistent parenting, prioritizing, and family influences. Research has demonstrated that the families component is the most successful at building strong communities through strong families.¹⁰⁷

Efficiency

The G.R.E.A.T. curriculum and officer training are free of charge to a community who wishes to implement the G.R.E.A.T. program. The program provides these services with federal grant monies.¹⁰⁸ However, this does not imply that there is no cost associated with G.R.E.A.T. Base A state Troopers makes approximately \$17.87/hr.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ G.R.E.A.T Middle School Component (2006, March 23). *G.R.E.A.T. Gang Resistance Education and Training*. Retrieved July 12, 2006, from <http://www.great-online.org/corecurriculum.htm>

¹⁰⁶ G.R.E.A.T Summer component (2006, March 23). *G.R.E.A.T. Gang Resistance Education and Training*. Retrieved July 12, 2006, from <http://www.great-online.org/greatsummerprogram.htm>

¹⁰⁷ G.R.E.A.T. Families Component(2006, March 23). *G.R.E.A.T. Gang Resistance Education and Training*. Retrieved July 12, 2006, from <http://www.great-online.org/greatfamiliestraining.htm>

¹⁰⁸ G.R.E.A.T., personal communication. July 31, 2006

¹⁰⁹ Maryland State Police Uniform Salary Schedule (July 2004). Retrieved August 1, 2006 from <http://www.mdsp.org/downloads/salarysworn.pdf>

Further, for the time a G.R.E.A.T. instructor is instructing a class or attending training, not only would his/her salary have to be paid, but a second law enforcement officer will need to be paid to perform the tasks the G.R.E.A.T. instructor cannot. In large jurisdictions, such as Prince George's and Montgomery Counties and Baltimore City, many instructors may be needed to accommodate the number of students in the schools, which would be quite costly. Also, in 2006, the closest G.R.E.A.T. officer training location was Lillington, NC.¹¹⁰ For officers to attend this two-week training, the state of Maryland would be responsible for the associated travel, hotel, and salary costs.

What's more, experience with the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program, a model quite similar in structure and scope to G.R.E.A.T., demonstrates that such programs may not be appropriate solutions. Studies have shown that participants are no less likely to use drugs than non-participants.¹¹¹ Also, the total estimated cost to employ a D.A.R.E. officer for one year (including supervisory, transportation, equipment and other overhead costs along with the officer's compensation) is \$68,572. For Maryland, this equated to over six million dollars spent on D.A.R.E. officers for the 1999-2000 school year. Despite this expense, only 10%¹¹² of Maryland's 683,564 school fifth-twelfth grade students¹¹³ received D.A.R.E. instruction that year.

Feasibility

¹¹⁰ G.R.E.A.T Training Schedule. (2006, May 9). *G.R.E.A.T. Gang Resistance Education and Training*. Retrieved July 12, 2006, from <http://www.great-online.org/trainingschedule.htm>

¹¹¹ Surgeon General of the United States. (2001). Chapter 5: Ineffective Primary Prevention Programs. *Youth Violence: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Retrieved on August 3, 2006, from <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence/chapter5/sec4.html#IneffectivePrimaryPrevention>

¹¹² Shepard, E.M III. (2001, November). *The Economic Costs of D.A.R.E.* Syracuse Institute of Industrial Relations Le Moyne College. Retrieved August 3, 2006, from <http://www.drugpolicy.org/docUploads/DAREfinal RP.pdf>

¹¹³ Maryland State Department of Education, The Factbook 2004-2005: A Statistical Handbook. Retrieved August 3, 2006, from <http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/FCB60C1D-6CC2-4270-BDAA-153D67247324/9706/FactBook20042005.pdf>

In order to successfully implement the G.R.E.A.T. program, a cooperative relationship must be established between the school system and law enforcement. The G.R.E.A.T. program provides a mutual contract that each party may sign, making this process simpler. However, the difficulty with the G.R.E.A.T. program lies in that both the school system and law enforcement must decide individually that a gang prevention program is needed. The school system must weigh the cost of devoting valuable classroom time to G.R.E.A.T. instructing while law enforcement must take on additional personnel to cover shifts that are spent at G.R.E.A.T. training and instructing.

Public Benefit

The G.R.E.A.T. program educates children on gang violence and establishes healthy relationships between youth and law enforcement officers. However, it is unclear whether the program effectively prevents youth from becoming involved in gangs or committing juvenile crime¹¹⁴.

Broader Urban Involvement and Leadership Development

Broader Urban Involvement and Leadership Development (BUILD) is one of the oldest gang prevention models still active. First implemented in 1969 as an intervention model, the prevention model was added as a result of BUILD members' observations of gangs openly recruiting on local school grounds.¹¹⁵

The BUILD prevention program consists of a number of different operatives, including a 10-week, school-based course that focuses on educating students to resist gang recruiters and violence, organizing activities youth can participate in, and

¹¹⁴ *Evaluating G.R.E.A.T.* (Rep. NCJ No. 198604). (2004, June). 810 Seventh Street N.W. Washington, DC 20531: U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs.

¹¹⁵ Reaching Out: Prevention. (2000). *Broader Urban Involvement and Leadership development*. Retrieved August 2, 2006, from <http://www.buildchicago.org/reaching/prevention.htm>

circulating street mentors to establish relationships with youth and provide skills to successfully avoid violence as well as promoting goals for the future.¹¹⁶

Because the goal of the BUILD program is not only to keep at-risk youth out of gangs and the criminal system but also to produce valuable members of the society, the program extends their services to serve older youth through college preparation for students in 9-12 grades. Their services include career exploration and preparation, tutorial services, college entrance examination preparation, college tours, guidance regarding admissions and financial aid procedures, and “college survival” workshops.¹¹⁷

Efficiency

The Chicago BUILD program currently has a \$2,047,125 budget, with \$591,048 financing the prevention program specifically.¹¹⁸ However, the cost for Maryland to implement BUILD will extend beyond the \$591,048 due to foundational costs associated with beginning a new program. Despite being a successful in the Chicago area, the BUILD program would not be a cost efficient option for Maryland at this point in time.

Feasibility

Although BUILD is looking to expand to new cities, it is currently in existence only in Chicago, IL. In order for the program to expand to other states, staff will need to be hired and trained, locations will need to be obtained, and curriculum will need to be chosen. Also, relationships between the program and school officials and the juvenile justice system will need to be established. Further, because BUILD has only been used in a single city, there is no way to know if the program is appropriate for the wider

¹¹⁶ Ibid

¹¹⁷ Ibid

¹¹⁸ BUILD Chicago. Personal communication, July 28, 2006.

demographics that would need to be considered for statewide implementation in Maryland.

Public Benefit

The BUILD program meets the needs of at-risk youth on two levels: education and after school mentoring. Youth are armed with the skills necessary to avoid gang involvement and provided with the guidance, security, and comradeship they would otherwise search for in gangs. Rather than being a short-term program, BUILD continues to mentor youth through middle and high school. DePaul University did an evaluative study of the BUILD program and concluded, “the program’s objectives were accomplished and in many instances exceeded, [owing] to the efforts of BUILD’s dedicated staff.”¹¹⁹ The public benefit of BUILD extends beyond the reduction in gang violence and juvenile crime. The young adults who exit the BUILD program are equipped with the skills to be leaders in the community and promote a positive change.

Boys and Girls Club of America Gang Prevention through Targeted Outreach

During the up surge of gang activity in the 1990's, the Boys and Girls Club of America created a youth gang prevention program. The program, Gang Prevention through Target Outreach (GPTTO), recruits and takes referrals from school administrators, social service caseworkers, and family members of at risk youth. The program defines at risk youth as youth, between the ages of six and eighteen who exhibit any of the following: antisocial behavior and delinquent beliefs, a favorable attitude towards drugs, poor refusal skills and stress¹²⁰.

¹¹⁹ Mendez, Mervin. *Positive Choices*. Chicago, Ill: DePaul University, Center for Latino Research.

¹²⁰ Boys and Girls Club Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach. (n.d.). *Helping America's Youth*. Retrieved July 31, 2006, from <http://guide.helpingamericasyouth.gov/programdetail.cfm?id=304>

The program consists of four components: (1) community mobilization through target-outreach to community members, (2) recruitment, (3) promotion of positive developmental experiences through interest-based programs that address the youth's specific needs, and (4) individual case management across four areas (law enforcement/juvenile justice, school, family and Club) to decrease youth's gang-related behaviors and contact with the juvenile justice system while increasing school attendance and academic success.¹²¹ Each youth is encouraged to stay active in the program for twelve months.

The purpose of GPTTO is to create a sense of belonging and security for each youth. This mitigates the appeal of gang membership and provides a support system that the youth may otherwise seek through gang membership. As the youth develop healthier relationships, their mentors may 'mainstream' them into regular Boys and Girls Club activities. The goal of the program is to completely integrate GPTTO students as non-GPTTO Boys and Girls Club members. Once this is accomplished, the Boys and Girls Club of America still provides the support and mentoring the youth may lack¹²².

Efficiency

The Gang Prevention through Targeted Outreach program can be implemented in Maryland at a low cost. Currently, 57 club sites are established across the state.¹²³ The annual incremental cost of the GPTTO program is \$340 per child. If the program were integrated into to an already established club site, it would cost \$17,000 per site at a full

¹²¹ Abrenton, Amy; Wendy McClanahan (2002). Target Outreach: Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Approach to Gang Prevention and Intervention. Pinkerton Foundation NY, pp. 7-8.

¹²² Ibid

¹²³ Boys and Girls Club of America, personal communication, July 20, 2006

capacity of 50 students¹²⁴. If the state of Maryland provided funding only to 25 of the most needed communities, the cost would be \$425,000 dollars to implement the program. This is an extraordinarily efficient way to reduce youth involvement in gangs.

Feasibility

Since the Boys and Girls Clubs are already established in parts of Maryland, the only necessary action from the State would be to provide the additional necessary funding specifically for the GPPTO program. This can be accomplished through the \$5.6 million dollars already allocated for gang prevention by Governor Ehrlich in the FY 2007 budget.

Another benefit of the Boys and Girls Club's model is that it focuses on the youth who are most at need, when they are most vulnerable. This saves valuable resources by focusing them where they are needed most, not to all youth, which is the case with many programs that contain an in-school component. Another benefit to the GPTTO program is that it does not require the coordination of both law enforcement and school administrators. This allows law enforcement to remain on the street protecting our citizens and school officials to focus on educating our children.

The downfall to the GPTTO program is the need for expansion. Baltimore City and the Eastern Shore are not properly represented by club sites. Therefore, expansion of Boys and Girls Club of America is necessary to serve all of Maryland's at-risk youth.

Public Benefit

In a study of 21 Boys and Girls Clubs, the GPTTO program has proven to produce "less contact with the juvenile justice system, fewer delinquent behaviors,

¹²⁴ Abrenton, Amy; Wendy McClanahan (2002). Target Outreach: Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Approach to Gang Prevention and Intervention. Pinkerton Foundation NY, pp 11

improved school outcomes [and] more positive social relationships and productive use of out-of-school time¹²⁵”. With these results, communities can expect less juvenile crime and more productive youth.

Recommendation

After reviewing the efficiency, feasibility and public benefits associated with each of the above mentioned programs, the Boys and Girls Club of America’s Gang Prevention through Targeted Outreach appears to be the best gang prevention option for the state of Maryland. By using the clubs already established in Maryland the State can avoid many of the costs associated with implementing a new program. The incremental cost of implementing GPTTO at a full capacity of 50 students is 17,000 per club unit¹²⁶. GPTTO should be implemented in communities that exhibit youth gang involvement

The state of Maryland is eligible for several private and Federal grants that could minimize the real cost to the State. The available private grants include the Freddie Mac Foundation Advocates for Children and Youth Grant, which provides a \$50,000 grant, and grants from Americorps*state and the Annie E. Casey Foundation which both provide varying amounts of grant money. In addition, multiple federal grants are available. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has four grants, all of which are mandated under the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency act of 1974, that the State of Maryland would be eligible for with youth gang prevention after school programs. These include the Special Emphasis grant, Delinquency Prevention grant and the Gang-Free Schools and Communities-Community-Based Gang Intervention grant.

¹²⁵ Abrenton, Amy; Wendy McClanahan (2002). Target Outreach: Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s Approach to Gang Prevention and Intervention. Pinkerton Foundation NY, pp 10.

¹²⁶ Ibid

GPTTO targets portion of the adolescent population who is most in need at the time they are most in need by providing mentoring, a safe environment, activities, and companionship, GPTTO will meet the needs of Maryland's youth and reduce the amount of youth gang involvement.

The social benefit of a successful gang prevention program would far outweigh the costs of implementation:

It is easier and cheaper to keep youth out of gangs than to get them out. As a result, prevention is a key factor not only in areas where gang activity is high, but also in areas with limited gang activity¹²⁷

Gang Intervention for Adolescents Involved with the Department of Juvenile Services

In 2005, violent crime increased nationwide at the highest rate in fifteen years. Experts blame this increase, at least in part, on the spread of gangs into less urban areas across the country. Experts also recognize that young people have the highest crime rate of any age group.¹²⁸ In Maryland, arrests of juveniles for violent crimes and theft increased 5% between 2001 and 2005 while the overall arrest rate for these crimes remained constant.¹²⁹ Further, right across the state line in our nation's capital, police officials are seeing an increase in both robberies and the use of guns by juveniles. D.C.

¹²⁷ *Reaching Out: Prevention. (2000). BUILD Broader Urban Involvement and Leadership Development . Retrieved July 13, 2006, from <http://www.buildchicago.org/reaching/prevention.htm>*

¹²⁸ Mendel, R. A. (n.d.). *Less Hype, More Help: Reducing Juvenile Crime, What Works – And What Doesn't*. American Youth Policy Forum: Washington.

¹²⁹ Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention. (n.d.) *State of Maryland 2006 Edward J. Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program Strategy*. Retrieved August 5, 2006, from http://www.goccp.org/686_three/notices/html/bjag_2006_strategy/index.html

Police Chief Charles H. Ramsey elaborated, “Four out of every 10 people arrested for robbery this year [2006] have been juveniles.”¹³⁰

Adjudicated Youth

The Problem

When youth enter detention facilities, they find themselves in a hostile environment that just exacerbates their troubled pasts. An estimated forty percent of confined youth are involved in gangs in order to gain the support and protection that they feel they need.¹³¹ A study by the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) found that “[g]angs... interrupt services in detention because different groups need to be kept separated.”¹³² Some gangs begin entirely within institutions and then continue their activities on the outside once inmates are released. It is widely believed that the experiences in detention strengthen gang affiliations.¹³³ In fact, the exposure to a “higher education in criminal behavior” that occurs in detention centers has actually been proven to increase long-term recidivism rates in juveniles.¹³⁴ Further, “[c]onfinement in a juvenile correctional facility is one of the strongest predictors of adult prison gang membership.”¹³⁵

¹³⁰ Eggen, D. (2006, June 13). Violent Crime Rises in U.S. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved June 24, 2006, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com>

¹³¹ Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (1998, August). Youth Gangs: An Overview. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*. Retrieved on July 4, 2006 from <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/jjbulletin/9808/scope.html>

¹³² Maryland Department of Juvenile Services. *Gap Analysis Report*. Retrieved on July 13, 2006, from http://www.djs.state.md.us/pdf/gap/gap_analysis.html

¹³³ Knox, G.W. (2005). *The Problem of Gangs and Security Threat Groups (STG's) in American Prisons Today: Recent Research Findings From the 2004 Prison Gang Survey*. National Gang Crime Research Center. Retrieved on July 12, 2006, from <http://www.ngcrc.com/corr2006.html>

¹³⁴ Center for Policy Alternatives. (n.d.) *Juvenile Detention Reform*. Retrieved July 4, 2006 from <http://www.cfpa.org/issues/issue.cfm/issue/JuvenileDetentionReform.xml>

¹³⁵ Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (1998, August). Youth Gangs: An Overview. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*. Retrieved on July 4, 2006 from <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/jjbulletin/9808/scope.html>

Maryland's Answer

First and foremost, the State should endeavor not to send children to these facilities because placement in any correctional facility separates young people from family and community supports. For many of the estimated fifty thousand entering the juvenile justice system in Maryland each year, better outcomes would likely be achieved by alternatives to placements in juvenile detention centers.¹³⁶ However, sufficient alternatives are not available for the close to 2,300 children and adolescents currently in residential care facilities associated with the DJS.¹³⁷

Fortunately, Maryland already has a successful community-based alternative in place. Multisystemic Therapy (MST) provides behavior modification for troubled juveniles and family-centered counseling for a youth's entire family.¹³⁸ MST interventions typically aim to address the inadequacies of a youth's social environment by improving caregiver discipline practices, improving family relationships, decreasing youth attachment to delinquent peers while increasing association with pro-social peers, engaging youth in pro-social recreational outlets, improving youth school and vocational achievement and opportunities, and developing a support system of extended family, neighbors, and friends.¹³⁹ In addressing these social inadequacies, MST decreases a youth's risk factors and likelihood for gang involvement.

What Still Needs to be Done?

¹³⁶ Mendel, R. A. (n.d.). *Less Hype, More Help: Reducing Juvenile Crime, What Works – And What Doesn't*. American Youth Policy Forum: Washington.

¹³⁷ Maryland Department of Juvenile Services. (n.d.) *Highlights of Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.'s Reform Plan for the Department of Juvenile Services: A "Child First" Culture 2003-2005*. Retrieved July 7, 2006, from http://www.djs.state.md.us/reform_highlights.html

¹³⁸ Mendel, R. A. (n.d.). *Less Hype, More Help: Reducing Juvenile Crime, What Works – And What Doesn't*. American Youth Policy Forum Washington.

¹³⁹ MST Services. (n.d.). MST Treatment Model. In *Multisystemic Therapy*. Retrieved on July 22, 2006, from <http://www.mstservices.com/text/treatment.html>

Three sites, located in Baltimore, Frederick, and Prince George's Counties, have had promising results and additional sites are being considered. However, as it stands, the limited reach of this program fails to address the needs of a majority of youth served by the DJS because they live outside of these jurisdictions.¹⁴⁰

Further, some juvenile offenders need to be in secure detention in order to protect themselves and/or the public. For these individuals, the juvenile detention centers that exist in Maryland today, such as Cheltenham, with their emphasis on punishment and repeated reports of abuse and neglect, are not the answer.¹⁴¹ Major concern exists regarding the increased risk of stress-related illnesses, psychiatric problems, future out-of-home placement, and suicide attempts that also results from placement in juvenile facilities.¹⁴² Therefore, reforms are necessary.

A successful model for juvenile corrections has been working in Missouri for nearly thirty years. Juveniles in Missouri's system meet with each other and staff members five times a day to discuss their feelings, both physical and emotional. This approach is extended so that, at any time, youth are allowed to call each other together to discuss concerns or complaints. David Addison, the chief juvenile public defender for Baltimore County, reflected, after visiting a St. Louis facility in 2002, that

¹⁴⁰ Maryland Department of Juvenile Services. (2005). *Annual Statistical Report*. Baltimore, MD. Retrieved on July 8, 2006, from http://www.djs.state.md.us/pdf/2005stat_report-section1.pdf

¹⁴¹ Amon, M. (2004, January 27). Md. Cites Progress At Center For Youth. In *Maryland Department of Juvenile Services*. Retrieved July 8, 2006, from http://www.djs.state.md.us/press_center/press_releases/pr012704.html

¹⁴² Center for Policy Alternatives. (n.d.) *Juvenile Detention Reform*. Retrieved July 4, 2006 from <http://www.cfpa.org/issues/issue.cfm/issue/JuvenileDetentionReform.xml>

I was very impressed with the professionalism of the staff, and I was impressed that the kids really understood what the program was all about. They were able to express it a lot better than a lot of the staff could explain it here in Maryland.¹⁴³ Residents also meet with counselors for daily, hour-long treatment sessions where they discuss their troubled pasts and future goals.¹⁴⁴ Maryland can employ these aspects of the model to capitalize on the success of MST by implementing the counseling techniques in juvenile detention facilities. Youth who commit crime have a number of common characteristics. Therefore, those placed in juvenile detention would benefit from the same gang prevention possibilities of MST as those who remain in community settings. Further, as commitment to a juvenile facility separates youth from their family and community, the efforts of MST to strengthen these ties are beneficial and much-needed.

Efficiency

MST is more successful and cost-effective than current juvenile corrections programs in use in Maryland: participants have 43% fewer arrests and 66% fewer weeks in juvenile detention center.¹⁴⁵ These statistics are especially notable because nationally, two-thirds of youth gang members return to gang activity after being released from correctional facilities. The detention facilities in use in Missouri, with their focus on counseling rehabilitation, cost the State just \$55 per juvenile per day, a savings of \$188

¹⁴³ Mendel, D. (Spring 2003). Small is Beautiful: The Missouri Division of Youth Services. *Advocasey: Documenting Programs that Work for Kids and Families*. Retrieved on July 2, 2006, from <http://www.aecf.org/publications/advocasey/spring2003/small/small.html>

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Mendel, R. A. (n.d.). *Less Hype, More Help: Reducing Juvenile Crime, What Works – And What Doesn't*. American Youth Policy Forum Washington.

per juvenile per day for the State of Maryland.¹⁴⁶ Further, a study by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy demonstrated that, for every dollar that is spent for MST, taxpayers are saved \$8.38 in other correctional services.¹⁴⁷ Further, juvenile detention, especially in facilities that face as many problems as those seen here in Maryland, usually results in the need to re-entry programs, an additional expense.

Feasibility

The success of this program for troubled youth in Maryland has already been demonstrated. DJS has had success with the three sites currently in operation and is preparing to expand the services into additional jurisdictions. Moreover, the governor's current efforts to increase the number of mental health professionals available to serve youth involved with DJS will go a long way toward ensuring that there is appropriate staffing for further implementation of MST, as will current efforts by DJS to recruit additional qualified direct care professionals.¹⁴⁸

Public opinion also supports the use of detention alternatives, with their focus on rehabilitating juveniles instead of punishing them. In fact, 90% of respondents to a poll by the Youth Law Center stated that they support rehabilitation programs over detention programs.¹⁴⁹

Public Benefit

¹⁴⁶ Who's Watching: Lack of Oversight Created Conditions for Crowded System. (2006, June 13). *The Indianapolis Star*. Retrieved July 19, 2006, from www.indystar.com

¹⁴⁷ Mendel, R. A. (n.d.). *Less Hype, More Help: Reducing Juvenile Crime, What Works – And What Doesn't*. American Youth Policy Forum Washington.

¹⁴⁸ Maryland Department of Juvenile Services. (n.d.) *Highlights of Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.'s Reform Plan for the Department of Juvenile Services: A "Child First" Culture 2003-2005*. Retrieved July 7, 2006, from http://www.djs.state.md.us/reform_highlights.html

¹⁴⁹ Youth Law Center. (October 2001). Public Opinion on Youth Crime and Race: A Guide for Advocates. *Open Society institute*. Retrieved on July 17, 2006, from http://www.soros.org/initiatives/justice/articles_publications/publications/public_opinion_youth_20011001/advocacyguide.pdf

When juvenile offenders are treated in home and community-based settings, the entire family benefits, not only from the stability that results directly from the youth in question not being removed from the home, but also from the fact that the entire family has access to services to address problems in the family that may be underlying some of the troublesome behavior of the youth involved with DJS.¹⁵⁰

Also, the goal of DJS, which is “to return these young people to society with a better chance of succeeding in life, away from a future of crime,” is directed toward the public benefit.¹⁵¹ This new approach will also obviously address this goal by reducing gang and other criminal activity by giving youth the skills and supports necessary to succeed without resorting to these problem behaviors. However, a greater benefit relates back to the fact that, as Judge Puig-Jugo pointed out at the sentencing of a known gang member, when gangs take youth into their groups, they take something away from society.¹⁵²

Youth Released from Juvenile Residential Facilities

The Problem

Beyond recruiting street gang members to join their organizations, many prison gangs have the ability to control, not only their members who are incarcerated, but also those on the outside. This raises the question “If gang members in prison can control their members outside the facility, then what are they doing when they leave the

¹⁵⁰ Mendel, R. A. (n.d.). *Less Hype, More Help: Reducing Juvenile Crime, What Works – And What Doesn't*. American Youth Policy Forum: Washington.

¹⁵¹ Maryland Department of Juvenile Services. (n.d.) Highlights of Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.'s Reform Plan for the Department of Juvenile Services: A "Child First" Culture 2003-2005. Retrieved July 7, 2006, from http://www.djs.state.md.us/reform_highlights.html

¹⁵² Cauvin, H. E. (2006, April 28). Former MS-13 Leader Gets 30 Years. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved June 24, 2006, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com>

facility.”¹⁵³ One such possibility is illustrated by the story of now 20 year-old Juan “Diabolico” Lopez, who has been a member of MS-13 since he was 17. This young man was released from prison in February 2005 after serving time for an armed robbery in Montgomery that he had participated. Just six months later, he was arrested again, this time for his involvement in the shooting death of a 15 year-old. He now faces a maximum of life in prison.¹⁵⁴

Maryland's Answer

A successful re-entry program already exists here in Maryland. Whereas prisoners released from the Maryland Division of Correction's facilities have an overall three-year recidivism rate over fifty percent, those who participate in the Maryland Re-Entry Partnership, a collaborative effort between nonprofit organizations, including the Enterprise Community Partnership, and a number of government agencies, including the Maryland Division of Corrections, the Maryland Division of Parole and Probation, and the Maryland Parole Commission, have a three year recidivism rate of just 20%. To achieve this, prisoners are provided with supportive services and case management at least seventy-five days before their release and can continue in the program for up to two years after their release. Services include transitional housing, employment and life-skills training and support groups.¹⁵⁵ These services are especially vital because the only other places prisoners may be able to access supports to meet these needs is through gang involvement.

¹⁵³ Tischler, E. (August 1999). Can tolerance be taught (understanding and reducing incidence of hate crimes) *Corrections Today*, 61 (5). 76. Retrieved June 24, 2006, from Academic ASAP database.

¹⁵⁴ Klein, A. (2006, June 29). First Guilty Plea in '05 Gang Slaying. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved June 29, 2006, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com>

¹⁵⁵ The Enterprise Foundation. (2004). *Innovations in Community Development: Maryland Re-Entry Partnership*. Retrieved July 1, 2006, from <http://www.enterprisefoundation.org/resources/documents/MdReEntry11705.pdf>

What Still Needs to be Done?

Despite the successes of the Maryland Re-Entry Partnership, the program continues to quite limited in its scope because of its severely restricted eligibility requirements. The most problematic exclusions with regard to youth involvement in gangs is that the program excludes juveniles, even though children as young as seven become gang members¹⁵⁶ and “[g]angs function to give adolescents a much-needed sense of belonging and self-esteem in the transition to adulthood”¹⁵⁷ and females, even though as many as 38% of gang members are female.¹⁵⁸

Efficiency

This program is very cost-effective, costing a mere \$3000 per inmate per year, 88% less than the cost to the Department of Corrections to house a prisoner in one of its facilities for one year.¹⁵⁹ This is especially remarkable given that the recidivism rate has been reduced from 50% to 20%.¹⁶⁰ Further, inmates who participate in this program and thereby do not return to either jail or gang life will likely become productive members of society, providing for themselves and their families, paying taxes, and enriching their communities instead of sitting in jail without being able to truly contribute to society overall or participating in gang activity to society’s detriment. Fortunately, approximately two million dollars has also been given to the Maryland Department of

¹⁵⁶ Maryland Department of Juvenile Services. (n.d.) *Gang Awareness in Maryland: Spend Time with Your Kids Now... So We Won't Have to Later*.

¹⁵⁷ Hixon, A.L. (1999, April 15). Preventing Street Gang Violence. *American Family Physician*. 59, 2121. Retrieved June 24, 2006, from Academic ASAP database

¹⁵⁸ The Center for Safe Youth. (2002). *Facts for Teens: Youth Gangs*. Retrieved July 3, 2006 from <http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/teens/docs/gangs.pdf>

¹⁵⁹ The Enterprise Foundation. (2004). *Innovations in Community Development: Maryland Re-Entry Partnership*. Retrieved July 1, 2006, from <http://www.enterprisefoundation.org/resources/documents/MdReEntry11705.pdf>

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

Corrections by the Office of Justice Programs of the United States Department of Justice.¹⁶¹

Feasibility

The Maryland Re-Entry Partnership can easily be implemented throughout Maryland. For one, the success of the program has already been determined right here in the state. Moreover, the program already has state involvement through the Maryland Division of Correction, the Maryland Division of Parole and Probation, and the Maryland Parole Commission. Upon the implementation of the program in the area where it currently exists, the Maryland Division of Parole and Probation assigned two agents to work exclusively with program participants.¹⁶² However, additional staffing allocations would not be necessary for the expansion of this program because those participants who require the involvement of a parole agent as part of their program participation would have been assigned to an agent whether they participated in the program or not. Also, many of the nonprofit organizations that participate in this program operate across the state. Therefore, the cooperation and infrastructure necessary to bring this program into being throughout Maryland already exists.

As for the political feasibility of such measures, there is significant public support. Eighty-eight percent of people support job training and placement for released prisoners.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Office of Justice Programs. U.S. Department of Justice. *State Activities and Resources: Maryland*. Washington, DC. Retrieved on July 13, 2006, from <http://www.reentry.gov/sar/md.html>

¹⁶² The Enterprise Foundation. (2004). *Innovations in Community Development: Maryland Re-Entry Partnership*. Retrieved July 1, 2006, from <http://www.enterprisefoundation.org/resources/documents/MdReEntry11705.pdf>

¹⁶³ Eagleton Institute of Politics Center for Public Interest Polling at Rutgers University. Prisoner Reentry: The State of Public Opinion. *National Institute of Corrections*. Retrieved on July 17, 2006, from http://www.nicic.org/Misc/URLShell.aspx?SRC=Catalog&REFF=http://nicic.org/Library/020542&ID=020542&TYPE=HTML&URL=http://www.njisj.org/reports/eagleton_report.html

Public Benefit

This program is in the public benefit for reasons other than the reduction of crime that accompanies a reduced recidivism rate. Giving former inmates the tools necessary to enable them to successfully return to their homes to become productive members of their communities will not only keep them away from gang activity, but will also reduce risk factors for others in their families because children they will not be exposed to the gang activities of their relatives, will have a more stable family, and will be less likely to live in poverty. The fact is that children who do not have an incarcerated parent are seven times less likely to become involved in criminal activity than those who do.¹⁶⁴

Recommendation

Each of the alternatives put forth in this proposal would reduce gang involvement for youth in contact with DJS. However, because the Maryland Re-Entry Partnership does not address gangs until after youth have already been exposed to the additional risk factors that contact with the juvenile justice tends to cause, MST is a more proactive and, therefore, a more desirable method. Moreover, community-based MST is preferable to the application of the model to juvenile detention facilities because the community-based option better serves the goal of preventing youth gang activity. The increased stability brought to families by the use of home and community-based interventions also benefits the community at large because stable families are the basis of stable communities and stable families and communities reduce the risk of gang activity. Lessening reliance on residential placements is also supported by public opinion: Over eighty percent of

¹⁶⁴ Corporation for National and Community Service. *Mentoring Incarcerated Youth to Reduce Recidivism*. Retrieved July 3, 2006 from http://nationalserviceresources.org/epicenter/practices/index.php?ep_action=view&web_id=33584

respondents to a poll conducted by the Youth Law Center expressed concerns regarding what happens to kids who are placed in juvenile detention facilities.¹⁶⁵

Further, residential placement is a costly solution for the juvenile justice system. Placement of a youth in a secure detention facility in Maryland costs \$243 per day.¹⁶⁶ However, the current funding for the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, which refers a number of youth to this program, is increasingly focusing more on residential placements and less on community based initiatives.¹⁶⁷ Progress has been made to the degree that Senate Bill 882 creates an advisory council to the Children's Cabinet charged with making recommendations regarding reducing the use of detention facilities as a means of intervention.¹⁶⁸ However, given that DJS already brought this circumstance to light through its *Gap Analysis Report*, there is no need to wait for the recommendation of the advisory council before shifting budget allocations to more home-based programs.

¹⁶⁵ Youth Law Center. (2001, October). Public Opinion on Youth Crime and Race: A Guide for Advocates. *Open Society institute*. Retrieved on July 17, 2006, from http://www.soros.org/initiatives/justice/articles_publications/publications/public_opinion_youth_20011001/advocacyguide.pdf

¹⁶⁶ Maryland Department of Juvenile Services. *Gap Analysis Report*. Retrieved on July 13, 2006, from http://www.djs.state.md.us/pdf/gap/gap_analysis.html

¹⁶⁷ Maryland Department of Juvenile Services. (2004, December). *Gap Analysis Report*. Baltimore, MD. Retrieved on July 8, 2006, from <http://www.djs.state.md.us/publications.html>

¹⁶⁸ Maryland General Assembly. (2006) Senate Bill 882.

Gang Suppression

The Problem

Stopping, or at least suppressing, gangs on the streets is a significant step in controlling gangs and gang crime. Therefore, the gangs that are already active and recruiting must be targeted so as to prevent any further loss of money, property, or life. However, there is no statewide method, policy or program to suppress gang violence.

Prevention and intervention strategies are excellent methods of addressing potential youth gang involvement, but do not deal with present gang activity. No anti-gang policy, legislation or initiative can be properly managed without a form of enforcement or criminal suppression. Because youth not only participate in youth gangs, but also are recruited into a variety of other gangs, including the Bloods and MS-13,¹⁶⁹ effective suppression of youth gang involvement must address all gangs. Therefore, the following proposal will address this issue by detailing a statewide gang suppression system.

In examining different approaches to gang enforcement, some commonality is evident. There is a common belief that it is in a state's best interests that enforcement remains within individual jurisdictions. However, the threat of gangs transcends county borders. Therefore, it is in the best interests of the State of Maryland to form, manage, and maintain a statewide policy that collaborate counties' resources and information.

Proposal

There are a number of different approaches to the suppression of gang-related criminal activity that have been implemented in the United States. Some jurisdictions,

¹⁶⁹ Bloods; MS-13. (n.d.). *Gangs in Maryland*. Retrieved June 30, 2006, from <http://www.gangs.umd.edu>

such as Sheboygan, Wisconsin, address gang problems through an overall street crimes unit.¹⁷⁰ However, gang crime has certain unique characteristics, such as that a great deal of the criminal activity is ethnic-based and that gang crime is more likely to be both serious and violent.¹⁷¹ Therefore, specific attention is necessary to effectively address the specific issue of gang crime in Maryland.

In the first months that Longmont, Colorado law enforcement officers have been focusing on gang crime by increasing street patrols and talking to citizens about what they see in their neighborhoods, 176 gang-related arrests have been made.¹⁷² Despite this admirable statistic, such an approach is not suitable to Maryland. For one, this technique would be inefficient for Maryland's statewide gang problem because, if such an approach was implemented in only some of Maryland's jurisdictions, gang members would simply move to the jurisdictions where there would be less law enforcement attention focused on their activities. Further, the implementation of this approach on a statewide scale would be infeasible. The implementation cost of this program for one year in a city with a population under 90,000¹⁷³ is \$598,000.¹⁷⁴ For Maryland, with its population of over 5.5 million,¹⁷⁵ the cost to provide equivalent enforcement would be around 59 million dollars.

¹⁷⁰ Sheboygan Police Department. (2005, April 1). Street Crimes Unit. *Sheboygan Police*. Retrieved August 3, 2006, from <http://www.sheboyganpolice.com/gang.htm>

¹⁷¹ O'Connor, T. (2005, October 1) *Intelligence Analysis of Gang Crime*. Retrieved August 3, 2006, from <http://faculty.nwc.edu/TOConnor/427/427lect18.htm>

¹⁷² Arthur, A. (2006, July 19). "Police: Gang suppression efforts seem to be working." *Longmont FYI*. Retrieved August 3, 2006, from www.longmontfyi.com

¹⁷³ City of Longmont. (2004, December). Community Data Summary *City of Longmont: Official Government Website*. Retrieved August 3, 2006, from <http://www.ci.longmont.co.us/about/demographics.htm>

¹⁷⁴ Arthur, A. (2006, July 19). "Police: Gang suppression efforts seem to be working." *Longmont FYI*. Retrieved August 3, 2006, from www.longmontfyi.com

¹⁷⁵ Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. (2004). *Maryland Vital Statistics Annual Report 2004*. Retrieved August 3, 2006 from <http://www.vsa.state.md.us/doc/04annual.pdf>

The statewide policy that is needed to suppress gang violence is a statewide gang strike force, such as has been developed in other states, including Texas,¹⁷⁶ Virginia,¹⁷⁷ and Massachusetts.¹⁷⁸ The standard, however, in the implementation of such a statewide strike force is Minnesota. Gangs had been a problem in Minnesota for quite some time. The violence peaked at 97 homicides in Minneapolis in 1995.¹⁷⁹ This was rapidly bringing a harmful reputation to the State of Minnesota and was causing loss on several different levels, as the problem transcended a single jurisdiction being able to control the situation and as the homicides resulted in Minneapolis being given the title of "Murderapolis."¹⁸⁰ In 1997, the Minnesota legislature created the statewide strike force to identify, investigate, arrest and prosecute gang members engaged in "criminal activity" in the State of Minnesota¹⁸¹. Though the organization has undergone different forms of executive political leadership, it has remained in service for the citizens for nine years..

The proposed strike force differs from the model in Minnesota in one significant aspect. Maryland's strike force is specifically tasked with the identification, investigation, and arrest of gang members engaged in criminal activity in the State of Maryland. Prosecution will remain the responsibility of the State's Attorney's Office because there

¹⁷⁶ Texas Gang Investigator Association. (2006). Retrieved August 4, 2006, from <http://www.tgia.org>

¹⁷⁷ de Voursney, D (2004, June, 17). Front and Center. Retrieved August 4, 2006, from <http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.9123e83a1f6786440ddcbeeb501010a0/?vgnextoid=579d6f9c97b32010VgnVCM1000001a01010aRCD&vgnextchannel=4b18f074f0d9ff00VgnVCM1000001a01010aRCD>

¹⁷⁸ Hoffman, L (2006, January, 05). Front and Center. *NGA Center for Best Practices* Retrieved August 4, 2006, from <http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.9123e83a1f6786440ddcbeeb501010a0/?vgnextoid=5cd10eeb571b8010VgnVCM1000001a01010aRCD&vgnextchannel=4b18f074f0d9ff00VgnVCM1000001a01010aRCD>

¹⁷⁹ Lehman, C. (2000). Striking Back. *Minnesota Medicine*, 83, Retrieved June, 28, 2006, from <http://www.mmaonline.net/publications/MnMed2000/September/Lehman.cfm>

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Minnesota's Gang Strike Force. (2005). Mission Statement. Retrieved June 24, 2006, from <http://www.dps.state.mn.us/strikeforce/documents/mgsf/mission.htm>

is a possibility that the authority of an independent branch will overreach, and involving itself in court and judicial affairs would mean just that.

The State of Maryland is just realizing the immense threat that gang violence poses. This is one of the most significant policies needed to contain and suppress gang activity where it resides. Though Maryland has been putting forward new initiatives for gang crime, the State should continue with keeping crime off of the streets and using the greater resources that state can provide to do so.

Force Structure and Organization

There are two models that have proven to be the most practical and generate the best results. The first model is one that unites the entire state into one jurisdiction for a statewide team. This was a model used in Minnesota for most of its strike force's tenure. Recently, however, there was a change in the structure that formed two distinct jurisdictions for the statewide force: a Metropolitan force and a Greater Minnesota force. This occurred for two reasons. First, jurisdictional competition began to emerge, which called for separation. Second, to the agency's dismay, the Governor's priorities shifted and, subsequently, caused a in cut the force's funding.¹⁸² The second model was then further structured into regional jurisdictions for better efficiency in allocating state resources. Though both have been proven effective, the legislature had decided to use the second model.

For Maryland, however, a hybrid model combining the two needs to be implemented. Maryland needs a fairly unique system because of its unique population and circumstances. Maryland is one of the only states to contain two metropolitan areas.

¹⁸² J Boisvert, personal communication, July 20, 2006

So, as opposed to the Minnesota model, there are, at least, three jurisdictions needed: the Washington Metropolitan area, the Baltimore Metropolitan area, and Greater Maryland. The determination of the composition of the regions should be the responsibility of the Oversight Assembly discussed below.

Maryland's strike force must be an independent entity. Autonomy is very important because it frees the political ties that one officer has to his or her own home jurisdiction.¹⁸³ While each county has its own specific interests, gangs are a statewide problem that necessitates a statewide solution. Therefore, each law enforcement officer involved with the strike force must understand that "No matter whose cop you are you are a state cop".¹⁸⁴

Basing off of that model, a chain of command needs to be established to bring together all of the resources and coordination needed. The top ranking body of authority, especially administrative authority, should be an oversight assembly that consists of the Attorney General of Maryland, Metropolitan county sheriffs or Chiefs of Police, a Department of Public Safety representative, a Maryland State Police representative, a Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention representative, a Department of Juvenile Services representative, a Department of Corrections representative, a Department of Parole and Probation representative, and one other sheriff from each strike force region that is to be determined by the legislature and articulated later.

Based on Minnesota's model, Maryland's Oversight Assembly should be tasked with the following:

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ J Boisvert, personal communication, July 20, 2006

1. Review existing and potential information sharing systems to be used by the force
2. Develop a Policy and Procedure manual to insure all funded forces use proper investigative protocols and record keeping.
3. Monitor gang trends in the state and the results achieved by the strike force.
4. Develop, monitor and internally appropriate an annual budget for the strike force.
5. Select and develop a job description for a Statewide Strike force Commander
6. Create and develop a continuing statewide strategy for combating gangs.¹⁸⁵

The Maryland Statewide Gang Strike Force Commander shall lead the strike force. This Commander is a full-time, non-political position that is selected by the Oversight Assembly. The Oversight Assembly may appoint any person that they deem fit or necessary for the position. While the Oversight Assembly decides the exact job description of the Commander, the purpose of the Commander is to do the following:

1. Act as a coordinator of all regional, jurisdictional, and inter-jurisdictional activity.
2. Serve as a liaison between the regional commanders and jurisdictions and the Oversight Assembly.
3. Issue an overall agenda to the regional commanders
4. Coordinate and submit approval for an operation.

¹⁸⁵ Minnesota Department of Public Safety. (2006). *Minnesota Gang and Drug Oversight Council 2006 Annual Report* (3-4).

The next part of the structure falls to regional commanders. A Regional commander is a full-time position that is very similar to a sheriff and serves as a coordinator of their region to the commander, executes the agenda provided, and has command and authority over the other investigators within their region. However, a regional commander has the same “on street” enforcement and suppression roles as the other investigators.

Lastly, the remaining component in the chain of command is the investigators. Investigators, similar to their superiors, are full-time personnel. The Oversight Assembly determines the number of investigators per jurisdiction. The investigators then fall under the authority of the regional commanders. The primary roles of the investigators are to gather intelligence on gang members and gang activity, to identify threats to the jurisdiction, to aid other jurisdictions when such aid is requested, and to perform operations to apprehend gang members.

Intelligence Systems

One of the most essential factors in impeding active gang violence is having the information readily available to do so. Therefore, for or cooperation on all levels, inside and outside of the Maryland’s gang strike force, all information on gang members and gang activity must be shared. Governor Ehrlich has taken steps toward this by creating a coordinating committee to address create a database on gangs.¹⁸⁶ However, before the database can be created, the Oversight Assembly, in cooperation with the coordinating committee, must determine whom the investigators will target when collecting such information and in their investigations in general. On top of the established criteria of

¹⁸⁶ Vogel, S. (2006, June 2). Broad Gang Presence Requires Parents’ Vigilance, Officials Say. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved June 24, 2006, from www.washingtonpost.com

'who a gang member is', there are three questions that need to be further examined: who is the person (identity), what is their legal status, and am I at risk with this individual?¹⁸⁷ Having a database that addresses all of these criteria would be the most efficient tool because it serves as an education resource, a prevention measure, and a monitoring device. Looking to Minnesota, a gang database for law enforcement was created along with the statewide strike force in 1997. A file named the Criminal Gang Pointer File was created so as to give all members a common reference for information.

The file was created as an anti-gang initiative to develop a statewide computer system to track gangs and the number of “confirmed gang members. The system was to be used throughout the state as a law enforcement tool, an officer safety tool, and as a tool for the judiciary.¹⁸⁸

The prime intelligence system for combating gangs is GangNet. Some states that are currently using GangNet are California, Minnesota, New York, New Mexico, and North Carolina. Minnesota reports in its 2006 budget of its statewide gang strike force that GangNet is costing them \$20,000 for licensing and maintenance fees. GangNet’s capabilities include providing built-in statistical reports, police report information, all information within the aforementioned pointer file, a slang dictionary, ad hoc reports, facial recognition, and mapping.¹⁸⁹ The system facilitates the sharing of information amongst law enforcement officials within the state in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

¹⁸⁷ Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention. (2006). *Maryland Statewide Gang Planning Workgroup Strategy Report* (12).

¹⁸⁸ Minnesota’s Gang Strike Force. (2005). Criminal Gang Pointer File. Retrieved July 13, 2006, from <http://www.dps.state.mn.us/strikeforce/documents/mgsf/tenpoint.htm>

¹⁸⁹ SRA International, Inc. (2005). GangNet White Paper. PSD – GangNet. Retrieved July 28, 2006, from http://psd.orionsci.com/Products/WhitePapers/GangNet_WP.pdf

However, the system can only display the information that is entered. Before Maryland can use this system, all jurisdictions must have sound information and intelligence gathering processes. To accomplish this, the state must award monetary appropriations to each jurisdiction to address their information and intelligence gathering needs. Continuing to base an estimate of the necessary budgetary an allocation off of Minnesota, the overall yearly licensing cost of GangNet is \$20,000. It should be of no further cost for a jurisdiction to maintain its own better records on the resources that are already made available, such as existing computers and the software already existing standard on the computer.

To further facilitate communication among the law enforcement agencies, the entire Maryland strike force must have ready access to GangNet.. Along with police jurisdictions inputting information, the following agencies should also contribute information: the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, the Department of Juvenile Services, and the Department of Corrections, and Department of Parole and Probation among others who possess any information regarding gang activity. Furthermore, to establish a sense of permanence, the database must be centralized through the Maryland State Police, rather than a Governor's office.

There must be established requirements for data entered into the database. Law enforcement entities should not only input past information, but also any information that is newly uncovered. Also, the information that is entered and available needs to be uniform statewide, including contact information individual demographics, personal attributes, gang involvement, identifying marks, and any available pictures or sketches of an individual gang member, crime area and territory gang specifics, gang leadership,

crimes committed, means in which crimes have been committed, rivalries, victim analysis, and potential targets for an entire gang sect. As one could imagine, having this kind of analytic information readily available could be the determining factor in successfully suppressing any and all gang violence where it resides.

Evaluation

Efficiency

The actual budget allocation for such a strike force is a difficult feature to gauge for a few different reasons. Prices and financial needs are simply different in the State of Maryland than in other states, especially Minnesota, whom this proposal is modeled after. The actual cost for Maryland depends on the number of personnel that the Oversight Assembly deems necessary, as well as the subsequent equipment needed. However, the 2006 Gang Strike Force Budget from Minnesota shows that just over three million dollars is appropriated through the state. The overall budget, however, for the Minnesota Gang Strike Force is \$5.6 million. The remaining \$2.6 million comes from the federal Byrne Grant. The Byrne Grant is awarded to states for use by state and local government to improve the functioning of the criminal justice system—with emphasis on violent crime and serious offenders—and enforce state and local laws that establish offenses.¹⁹⁰ This is a grant that is administered in Maryland through the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP). As GOCCP is currently using Byrne Grant allocations to assist local law enforcement in combating gang crime, using Byrne Grant funds for this

¹⁹⁰ Bureau of Justice Assistance (2004). Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Grant Program. *Programs*. Retrieved July 17, 2006, from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/byrne.html>

strike force would be consistent with the State's current expenditures of such money.¹⁹¹

Many states find success in drawing significant monetary needs from this renowned grant program.

To truly appreciate the cost-effectiveness of this measure, one must compare the costs to the social and political benefits. Approximately \$5.5 million dollars is a solemn investment for the social and political benefit. With less street crime, there will be fewer businesses disrupted due to gang attacks. It is also an investment in tourism, which is a very significant portion of Maryland's business revenues. If people know that certain tourist attractions, such as the metropolitan areas of Washington and Baltimore and Annapolis are protected from gangs, more people will want to spend time and money in these areas. Maryland generates approximately \$2.2 billion dollars in taxes through tourism, as well as another \$9.3 billion in tourism business.¹⁹²

This is a very sound investment for the fact that it identifies with the needs of the public and the priorities of the administration. This touches on, at least, two pillars of the Ehrlich administration: public safety and safe neighborhoods and commerce. Being that this type of program reaches this deeply into the different programs of the government and the needs of the people and the economy, it is of the utmost cost effectiveness and efficiency.

Feasibility

One factor that impacts the feasibility of such a proposal is the political reality in Maryland. Counties could be very territorial and wish to continue with their existing

¹⁹¹ Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention. (n.d.) *State of Maryland 2006 Edward J. Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program Strategy*. Retrieved August 5, 2006, from http://www.goccp.org/686_three/notices/html/bjag_2006_strategy/index.html

¹⁹² Maryland tourist revenue rises. (2004, December, 3). *Washington Business Journal*

system. However, the answer to such a concern is that, as has already been stated, this is to be an independent body from existing law enforcement jurisdictions and resources. Individual counties are only required to submit information to the strike force; provision of personnel and other resources by a given county to the strike is completely voluntary. The existing strike force does not preclude any existing or newly developed programs in individual counties.

Another issue that impacts feasibility in this instance is the reality of implementing a totally new program to the state. This is a program that has no predecessor in Maryland. This makes it difficult to compare against a fundamental or base model. However, basing a potential Maryland model off of a best practice model, demonstrates that the implementation of such a strike force is entirely feasible in this setting or any other setting if the proper oversight and leadership structure, as well as a cooperation that is established from the beginning.

Public Benefit

The public benefit of this task force is nearly undisputable. In getting criminals off of the street, the state is promoting the community and the welfare of the constituents. People will feel safe in their communities with the piece of mind that the fear¹⁹³ that kept them away from life's activities is no longer necessary because gangs cannot harm them any longer. Businesses can operate more freely, with less fear of being vandalized or burglarized. Thus, there is a generation of more revenue for the individual businesses as well as business overall. There is also a reputation that is all-inclusive as part of public benefit because people out-of-state and in state know the surrounding environment is

¹⁹³ Bureau of Justice Assistance. (2003, July) Gang and Drug-Related Homicide: Baltimore's Successful Enforcement Strategy. *BJA Bulletin*. Retrieved August 5, 2006, from <http://www.ncjrs.gov/html/bja/gang/>

safe. The reputation as a safe area that Maryland could gain by implementing this strike force would attract out-of-state individuals to come to Maryland, which would further increase the financial state of affairs of the state. Establishing a statewide gang strike force is one of the best measures to ensure public happiness and financial results.

Final Recommendation

Taking a youth based preventative approach addresses the causes of gangs before they promulgate into a costly and violent problem as opposed to relying solely on the enforcement of laws and the incarceration of criminals. A last resort ought not to be the State's only resort. However, it must also be recognized that no one approach will reach all people in need. Further, other cities have had success in reducing youth gang involvement by using these sorts of approaches together. Boston achieved a 78% reduction in its homicide rate between 1990 and 1998 by introducing a youth gang taskforce and implementing community-based prevention and intervention programs to address juvenile delinquency and gang involvement.¹⁹⁴ Therefore, the implementation of not only the prevention proposal, but also the intervention and enforcement proposals outlined above, will lead to the best outcomes for all of Maryland's citizens.

¹⁹⁴ Mendel, R. A. (n.d.). *Less Hype, More Help: Reducing Juvenile Crime, What Works – And What Doesn't*. American Youth Policy Forum: Washington.

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